United Nations A/C.2/60/SR.20

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
2 December 2005

Original: English

Second Committee

Summary record of the 20th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 2 November 2005, at 9.30 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Toscano (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Switzerland)

Contents

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

(e) Sustainable development in mountain regions

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

05-58325 (E)

In the absence of Mr. Wali (Nigeria), Mr. Toscano (Switzerland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 9.40 a.m.

Agenda item 52: Sustainable development (A/60/3, Suppl. No. 3, A/60/25, Suppl. No. 25, A/60/25/Add.1, A/60/79, A/60/111, A/60/129, A/60/336 and A/60/167)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/60/115, A/60/261 and Corr.1 and A/60/158)

(b) Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/60/401)

(c) International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180)

(d) Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind (A/60/171)

(e) Sustainable development in mountain regions (A/60/309)

(f) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, including the implementation of the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 (A/60/154 and A/60/82)

(g) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/60/169 and A/60/171)

(h) Convention on Biological Diversity (A/60/171)

(i) Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas

1. **Mr. Jomo** (Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that the 2005 World Summit had reaffirmed the firm commitment to sustainable development and reiterated the importance of integrating the three pillars of such development. More and more countries were integrating sustainable development principles into national and local development strategies. Governments, civil society and other stakeholders were no longer satisfied with strategies; they wanted results. That same expectation had been driving the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, focused on action-oriented policy decisions to speed up implementation in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

2. The Mauritius Strategy advocated specific action to strengthen the capacity of small island developing States to address their vulnerabilities. Referring to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, he said that climate action and energy use must be approached in the wider context of sustainable development. Every effort must be made to meet that urgent challenge; the upcoming eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties and first Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal would be the ideal setting for strengthening global efforts to advance mitigation and adaptation strategies in the broad context of sustainable development.

3. The accelerated development and use of renewable energy offered multiple benefits for sustainable development. The fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development should galvanize global action to promote renewable energy and to formulate follow-up to the World Solar Programme 1996-2005. The recent spate of natural disasters throughout the world underscored the need for the international community to redouble its efforts to reduce the impact of such disasters. Despite encouraging progress since the Johannesburg Summit, sustainable development remained a major challenge. The international community must therefore take swift collective action in order to fulfil its commitments, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg targets, so that the broad common development vision could be transformed into reality.

4. **Mr. de Villiers** (Observer for the World Tourism Organization), introducing his organization's report on the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (A/60/167), said that tourism had become the world's largest export industry, accounting for 7.5 per cent of the value of worldwide exports of goods and

services. It was one of the biggest employers in the world and, since it generated jobs in remote and rural areas, had a significant impact on poverty alleviation. However, not all forms of tourism were good or acceptable. Unregulated tourism could have a serious adverse impact on the natural and cultural environment of receiving destinations, particularly in developing countries. The Code of Ethics had arisen out of the need to develop tourism on the basis of sound and fundamental values; it was voluntary and non-binding. A World Committee on Tourism Ethics had been created to monitor, evaluate and guide the implementation of the Code. In conclusion, he called on the governments that had not already taken steps to disseminate and implement the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to develop a policy in that regard.

5. **Mr. Egeland** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), introduced the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180). Disaster risk reduction was currently at the top of the international community's agenda, especially in the light of the unprecedented number of recent natural disasters, including the devastating tsunami. While such disasters could not have been avoided, early warning and a swifter response could have saved many lives and livelihoods. In that regard, the Hyogo World Conference on Disaster Reduction had provided an opportunity for the international community to rethink strategies for reducing the root causes of disasters. While the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities was a major step forward, there was still a need to secure a higher level of commitment for systematically reducing risk and strengthening institutional capacities at local and national levels. Had the actions and recommendations set out in the Hyogo Framework been implemented, many deaths and considerable losses would have been avoided. For example, the application of building codes to schools and hospitals in Pakistan, the maintenance of levees and restoration of wetlands in Louisiana or instruction on how to react to the precursory signs of tsunamis would not only have saved lives but would also have been cost effective.

6. The key elements of the strengthened International Strategy for Disaster Reduction were: a *strengthening of the leadership role played by the* Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations; a strong partnership between the humanitarian and development programmes of the United Nations; an expanded Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction with a programme committee and active participation of governments; and a strengthened partnership with donors and scientific institutions.

7. All development programmes and investments should be disaster-risk sensitive. Also, more stable resources must be allocated to the core needs of the International Strategy from Member States and from the regular budget of the United Nations. Furthermore, there was a need to increase technical and scientific understanding of disaster risk and to build a capacity to share knowledge on what was doable with decision makers and the population at large.

8. **Mr. Diallo** (Executive Secretary, United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa (UNCCD)) introduced the reports on implementation of the Convention (A/60/171) and on preparations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006 (A/60/169). The former highlighted, inter alia, recent major developments in the context of the Convention and synergies between the Convention and other relevant instruments, including the United Nations Forum on Forests. The third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention had discussed specific thematic issues pertaining to the implementation process in Africa, including participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations; legislative and institutional frameworks; resource mobilization; and rehabilitation of degraded land and early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought.

9. It had been decided at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to conclude a memorandum of understanding with the Council of the Global Environment Facility (GEF). That session had encouraged Parties to strive for coordinated implementation and invited the governing bodies of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and of the Convention on Biological Diversity to take into consideration UNCCD decisions relating to synergies in their deliberations. Lastly, referring to the financial resources of the Convention, he said that many Parties

were disappointed by the decision on the programme and budget to finance activities of the secretariat; that decision would lead to a significant staff reduction, thus hampering the secretariat's ability to deliver.

10. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification would raise public awareness of the issue of desertification and protect the biological diversity, knowledge and traditions of communities affected by desertification. Major initiatives would be undertaken during the Year on key sectoral issues such as: youth and desertification; women and desertification; civil society and desertification; and poverty, hunger and desertification. The Government of Algeria would host a Summit on the theme of desertification, migrations and security to conclude the International Year.

11. **Mr. Kinley** (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (A/60/171), said that 2005 had seen the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, giving renewed political momentum to efforts to deal with the challenge of global climate change. Many recent events had demonstrated the world's vulnerability to climate-related disasters. The tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention had adopted a programme of work on adaptation and response measures, an important step in mainstreaming adaptation into the international response to climate change and into sustainable development planning. The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties was expected to adopt a five-year programme of work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of climate impact and vulnerability and adaptation to climate change.

12. The tenth session had showed strong support for the fully operational clean development mechanism (CDM) and opened the way for new types of CDM projects relating to small-scale forestry in addition to existing projects that produced power from renewable energy sources or from methane captured at landfills. Progress had also been made on the issue of financial support for developing countries. The Special Climate Change Fund would initially provide resources for adaptation and technology transfer and its associated capacity-building. To date, pledges of $34 million had been made. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation had agreed on a draft decision on the Least Developed Countries Fund, which would support the preparation and implementation of national adaptation programmes of action in least developed countries. Initial voluntary contributions of about $33.5 million had been made to that Fund; it was clear, however, that additional financial support would be required to meet the pressing needs of developing countries in mitigating and adapting to climate change.

13. As at 19 October 2005, 127 developing countries had submitted their initial national communications. Noting that political attention to the issue of climate change was greater than ever, he hoped that the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties, together with the historic first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol in Montreal, would lead to progress in a number of key policy areas, including decisions completing the Protocol's institutional architecture and strengthening the emerging carbon markets. It was important to send a clear signal to the markets that governments intended to value the emission credits generated beyond the end of the Protocol's first commitment period in 2012. He also hoped that outstanding funding issues would be resolved in Montreal.

14. **Mr. Hunte** (Liaison Officer, Convention on Biological Diversity), introducing the report of the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, contained in section III of document A/60/171, said that the parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety currently numbered 124, and the Protocol had therefore garnered the broad level of support needed to ensure its objectives. He appealed nevertheless to remaining States to accede to the Protocol and to play a role in the new regime.

15. He referred to several meetings held in 2005 within the framework of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Cartagena Protocol, as outlined in paragraph 2 of section III A, and highlighted the major decisions and outcomes since the previous report. The report underscored some of the important tools developed at the second meeting of the Conference of the Parties for the effective implementation of the Protocol. The Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Protected Areas had a number of outcomes, including the initiation of work to compile and synthesize existing ecological criteria for future identification of potential sites for protection in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and an agreement on

options for mobilizing financial resources for the implementation of the programme of work. In December 2005, the Working Group would continue to identify options for cooperation for the establishment of marine protected areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction. Progress toward the 2010 biodiversity target and the tangible measurement of that progress would be a key challenge in the years to come.

16. As regards cooperation with other conventions and international organizations and initiatives, a paper on the subject had been prepared in consultation with the secretariats of the five biodiversity-related conventions and a joint statement had been issued at the 2005 World Summit.

17. At the first meeting of the Ad hoc Open-Ended Working Group on Review of Implementation of the Convention, in September 2005, nine recommendations had been adopted on the review of processes and mechanisms, cooperation and engagement of the private sector, monitoring, reporting and evaluation processes. Participants had agreed on the need to streamline Convention processes and to provide assistance for national implementation.

18. With the continued support of Government organizations, civil society and the scientific community, the Convention would meet expectations and contribute significantly to sustainable development and poverty eradication.

19. **Mr. Rahmani** (Algeria), speaking in his capacity as an honorary spokesperson for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006, said that the issue of desertification had grown in importance and transcended geographical boundaries. There was a triple "decoupling". The first was between man and the stock of land and natural resources available to support the needs of humans. Demographic growth over territory that consisted largely of unproductive and fragile land and infertile soil, and the absence of soil replenishment had eroded the natural capital and exerted excessive pressure on existing natural resources. That situation had generated conditions of extreme poverty in desert areas, leading to massive emigration from those regions and spreading insecurity.

20. Secondly, as an example of the decoupling between traditional knowledge and modernization, he cited the example of the ancient system of irrigation that had sustainably channelled water underground to the places where they were needed, as opposed to the use of more recent drilling technology that had raised the salinity of the water supply and led to the degradation of biodiversity, water quality and land use in the deserts, and a wasted water supply. In parallel, a number of intangible qualities had also been eroded, such as cultural expressions associated with the former way of life in deserts: dialects, music and craftsmanship. The commemoration in 2006 of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification should raise awareness of traditional knowledge of communities affected by desertification and disappearing cultures. Good governance would entail the modernization of traditional knowledge and the conservation of agriculture in desert regions in a manner that boosted land productivity, and updated and widely disseminated traditional knowledge. Alternative strategies should be adopted to develop diverse fields of economic activity, which should be integrated into local and international policies that would create a leverage effect for the benefit of the populations living in desert areas.

21. The third "decoupling" referred to commitments made with respect to the Millennium Development Goals and the fact that the majority of extremely poor people lived in vulnerable regions. Unless serious and sustained action was taken with regard to desert populations, the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction and access to safe drinking water would be unattainable. The activities scheduled for the International Year should inform, enlighten and sensitize the international community on the threats posed by unfettered desertification, and the need for governments and public-private partnerships to incorporate policies targeting those objectives.

22. He appealed to the international community to respond to the desperate needs of desert populations and to mitigate the potential threat to world peace, the insecurity and the propagation of fear that could arise from the effects of destabilization in desert regions.

23. **Mr. Amin** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) introduced the report of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GC/GMEF) on its twenty-third session and the addendum to the report (A/60/25 and Add.1) and noted that environmental policy issues had grown in significance in General Assembly deliberations. UNEP looked forward to

further mainstreaming of environment in the work of the Assembly.

24. At the latest session of the Governing Council, held in February 2005, there had been increased high-level representation from the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as from academia, NGOs, business and industry, and youth organizations. Participants had unanimously expressed their conviction that environmental sustainability was crucial for the successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and that the sustainable use of the natural resource base and responsible environmental management practices were prerequisites for development. The outcome of the ministerial segment was reflected in the President's summary and contained specific recommendations for the international community and governments. The ministers had highlighted the failure to operationalize the link between environmental sustainability and the Goals, recommending systematic integration of environmental sustainability considerations into all national poverty reduction strategies, United Nations development assistance frameworks and national development plans.

25. The ministers had also recommended further efforts to provide the economic rationale for investment in environmental sustainability, increased investment in environmentally sustainable water, sanitation and human settlements programmes within the framework adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development, and recognition of the need for more affordable, small-scale and environmentally sustainable infrastructure giving priority to the needs of the poor.

26. A number of decisions of importance to the work of the Committee had also been adopted by the Council/Forum, including a decision on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and on early warning systems to prevent a recurrence of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

27. The budget and work programme for 2006-2007 had been approved at $144 million, a 15 per cent increase over the previous biennium. The rising level of appropriations for the Environment Fund demonstrated growing confidence by member States in the work of UNEP. A decision on the international environmental governance process had underscored the full funding and implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building, which had been adopted by the Governing Council. The Plan represented a major development in the UNEP mandate to provide technical assistance at the country level, and in the level of cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) under the memorandum of understanding between the two Programmes. Other issues discussed had included the updated proposal by the Executive Director on an "Environment Watch" framework, to be submitted for consideration at the ninth special session to be held in Dubai in February 2006. Decisions had also been taken to strengthen the Environment Management Group and to appoint a director at a higher level, to discuss universal membership at the special session, and to provide the conclusions of that debate to the Secretary-General for inclusion in his report to the General Assembly.

28. A comprehensive decision on chemicals management, including lead in gasoline and mercury containment, had also been adopted, and the updated water policy and strategy of UNEP had been approved by the Council/Forum, and would be implemented and reviewed in consultation with governments.

29. The fight against poverty could not be won without sufficient protection of the natural resources base. Suffering was disproportionately greater among the poor when nature's warning signals were ignored, and leaders attending the 2005 World Summit had pointed out that environmental degradation exacerbated natural disasters. Understanding had grown even in the developed countries that the world could not simply continue to satisfy a hunger to consume. By acting as responsible stewards for the environment, the international community would make a useful contribution to the well-being of future generations. At the ninth special session, the Governing Council planned to consider its response to the far-reaching decisions on environment and sustainable development issues adopted at the 2005 World Summit.

30. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Director, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Liaison Office with the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable mountain development (A/60/309), said that mountain environments worldwide still faced many challenges, despite the

international community's increased commitment to improving the well-being of mountain people. Wherever people lived, they were dependent on mountains for fresh water and for many varieties of food and, despite their enormous genetic diversity, mountain ecosystems were extremely fragile and under daily threat from climate change and human activity. As a result, over 245 million rural mountain people in developing and transition countries risked, or actually experienced, hunger and food insecurity.

31. Commitment to implementing chapter 13 of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development (Agenda 21) adopted at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development ("Earth Summit"), the blueprint for sustainable mountain development, had been strengthened with the celebration of the International Year of Mountains in 2002. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation described the actions needed for sustainable mountain development and served, with chapter 13 of Agenda 21, as its overall policy framework.

32. There was a need for better coordinated cooperation at all levels, increased funding and investment in mountain areas, and a stronger enabling environment with more supportive laws, policies and institutions in order to tackle effectively the precarious situation of the millions living in remote mountain regions. The International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions had steadily gained acceptance and served as a framework for long-term cooperation on sustainable mountain development, offering opportunities for networking and for initiating or strengthening activities.

33. As of October 2005, the Partnership comprised 44 countries, 14 intergovernmental organizations and 68 major group organizations from civil society, the non-governmental community and the private sector. It addressed, among other things, chronic poverty in mountain regions, and its members supported a variety of programmes, developed national policy initiatives and promoted regional cooperation and cross-border approaches.

34. The report suggested several courses of action for the achievement of sustainable mountain development: intersectoral collaboration; education and capacity-building; promotion of national strategies and plans; involvement of civil society and the private sector, and stronger channels of cooperation, coordination and communication. Member States should implement the recommendations and proposals in the report, so that concerted efforts to better the situation of mountain people and protect fragile mountain environments might yield lasting results.

35. **The Chairman** requested clarification on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and an update on developments regarding early warning systems.

36. **Mr. Amin** (Director, New York Office, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)) said that the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, launched years earlier with a number of partners, was a wide-ranging study of world ecosystem trends. Its most disturbing finding had been an alarming deterioration of the world's major natural resources, particularly as it affected the planet's biodiversity and other sustainability issues. If the Committee were willing, delegations' scientific representatives might be invited to the Committee for a substantive briefing from his Office.

37. **Ms. Molín-Valdés** (International Strategy for Disaster Reduction) said that governments, especially that of Sri Lanka, had been investing in early warning systems. Her Office had so far received 50 replies to a survey on that subject, which should be completed early in 2006 in time for the Third International Conference on Early Warning to be held in Bonn in March. Coordination on early warning was being organized in Perth, Australia, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was also working on a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean, which should be in place by 2006; there were plans for similar mechanisms to increase natural disaster capacity in the Mediterranean and Caribbean basins.

38. **Mr. Lorenzo** (Dominican Republic) asked the observer for the World Tourism Organization what means would be used to attain a balance between the development of tourism and the protection of natural resources. Regarding corporate and social responsibility, developing countries sometimes had to make their own decisions concerning economics and the consequences of large-scale tourism.

39. **Mr. de Villiers** (Observer for the World Tourism Organization) said that tourism must not only maintain environmental health, but also provide opportunities for both developing and developed countries to benefit

from the industry. The purpose of the Global Code of Ethics was to guide the various stakeholders on how tourism should move forward.

40. **Mr. Sopoaga** (Tuvalu) asked the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to explain the funding of the upcoming biennial programme of the Convention. There seemed to be no certainty that important activities would not be shelved if the funding situation did not improve, posing a serious threat to mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

41. **Mr. Kinley** (Officer-in-Charge, United Nations Framework on Climate Change), said that the core budget had increased owing to changes in exchange rates but that its secretariat would need to carry out some fund-raising in order to finance certain activities. The Third World Participation Fund, however, had an excellent contribution record and would give extra support in the current year to the least developed and small island countries.

42. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States) said that an entire section of the Mauritius Strategy was devoted to its implementation. He had focused on that aspect of the outcome of the 10-year review process so as to prevent it from becoming mired in bureaucracy and thus losing momentum.

43. The Mauritius Strategy would be more effectively implemented if the regional intergovernmental organizations of the small island developing States were more actively involved in the process; since they were most familiar with the capacities of the countries in their respective regions, they could be more proactive in monitoring the implementation process. In that endeavour, they should be supported by the relevant United Nations agencies so that the States concerned could harness their full potential for efficient follow-up of the Mauritius Strategy. Regional meetings — three of which had been held in October in the Caribbean, Pacific, and Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China regions — would prepare implementation measures and culminate in the interregional meeting shortly to be held in Rome, which was expected to define specific implementation measures.

44. Small island developing States must be enabled to shoulder responsibility for their own development, as spelled out in the Mauritius Strategy. The United Nations Resident Coordinator system should help individual States, upon request, to prepare nationally prioritized implementation plans, in which civil society and the private sector were fully involved and those efforts should be supplemented by development partners, in fulfilment of their Mauritius commitments. Otherwise the discouraging experience of national implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action would be repeated.

45. The Secretary-General had stressed the importance of advocacy and mobilization of international support for mainstreaming small island developing States' implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The strong support for those States' development objectives, as reflected in the World Summit Outcome, had boosted United Nations efforts in that regard. His Office had initiated its advocacy and support mobilization efforts at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005, the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, the sixty-first annual ministerial meeting of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in May, and the Second South Summit in June. His Office had been developing collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, regional financial institutions, the Global Environmental Facility and other partners.

46. His Office had been actively raising awareness of the new and emerging issues identified in the Mauritius Strategy at multilateral forums and highlighting small island developing States' interests, especially in the areas of trade preferences, information and communication technology, and HIV/AIDS. He urged all other relevant organizational partners to assume their responsibilities in those areas.

47. Turning to agenda item 85 (c), he said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/180) provided an overview of the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the follow-up activities relating to the Kobe World Conference. That was a subject of particular relevance to the least developed and small island developing States, with limited capacities, whose uphill struggle to attain sustainable development was regularly thwarted by natural disasters. As reflected in the Hyogo Framework for Action, those usually most affected by natural

disasters were the poor and socially disadvantaged in developing countries.

48. Recent events had shown only too clearly that natural disasters affected islands and continents with equal fury and devastation. In the case of the most vulnerable countries, the impact was magnified because of their limited areas of shelter and low resilience capacity to deal with the aftermath at any level, let alone embark on reconstruction and rehabilitation. The tolerance of victims was stretched to its limits in their attempts to return to normal pre-disaster life. Just as disaster risk had been recognized as a priority topic in the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the issue of small island developing States' reaction to disasters had been taken into account in the Mauritius Strategy.

49. He welcomed the fact that regional organizations, resources, capacity and expertise in disaster management were involved in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework and that the African Union had acknowledged the African regional strategy for disaster risk management. Further work was being done at the subregional level: in the Pacific region with the assistance of the South Pacific Allied Geoscience Commission, and in the Caribbean with that of the Organization of American States. But international, regional and subregional efforts needed to go hand in hand with national initiatives. Several countries, including Bangladesh, Mauritius and Uganda, had incorporated disaster risk measures into their common country assessments and United Nations development assistance frameworks. All least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States should emulate that example.

50. Progress on establishing early warning systems was heartening, especially in the wake of the Asian tsunami. His Office was working on the issues of disaster insurance and operationalization of the Emergency Fund for Disasters, both of particular interest to small island developing States.

51. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and referring to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (A/60/261 and Corr.1), said that over the past 15 years the international community had worked out an extensive plan, covering a wide range of development-related areas, to enable developing countries to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development. The Economic and Social Council was responsible for monitoring and guiding implementation of the different agreements, through the Commission on Sustainable Development, which had agreed to focus on water, sanitation and human settlements in its first two-year cycle. The Secretary-General's report had indicated positive elements but had also highlighted more negative issues, particularly the challenge to ensure effective follow-up to policy decisions concerning the focus areas, and the need to provide national and local authorities with financial and technical assistance for dealing effectively with sewage and waste water. The call for donor Governments and international financial institutions to provide funding to assist developing countries to implement the decisions of the Commission's thirteenth session was therefore very welcome.

52. It appeared that some 300 partnerships had been registered with the Commission's secretariat, mainly among Governments or intergovernmental organizations; but there were few partnerships within the private sector or between the public and the private sectors. Yet the involvement of the private sector would generate new financial and technical resources. The report also referred to the role of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), inter-agency collaborative mechanisms and the refinement of the Commission's working methods. The Group of 77 and China would like to be assured that no innovation would affect the nature of the Commission or the responsibility of Governments to determine policy and give policy guidance and direction.

53. The report of the Secretary-General on the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (A/60/401) provided very useful information on coordination and rationalization efforts within the United Nations system and the agencies active in different aspects of the Mauritius Strategy. Nevertheless, no activity had been identified in the area of global governance, including trade and finance, to enhance coherence and create the improved international enabling environment. The Group of 77 and China hoped that, with the recognition of the

special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States by the 2005 World Summit and the reaffirmation of commitments to take urgent and concrete action to address them through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, there would be a more positive response from all international institutions and donor Governments.

54. From the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/60/180), the Group of 77 and China took particular note that the international financial institutions were called upon to integrate the goals of the Hyogo Framework into their own strategies and to operate within existing coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group. The quick response of the international community to develop an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean was appreciated. The substantial additional effort and resources needed to create a fully fledged multihazard early warning system should be viewed in the context of the costs associated with failing to do so. The recommendations in the report should be updated to take into account the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

55. Protection of the global climate was one of the most important issues facing the international community, but one on which positions were still sharply divided. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions (A/60/171), 123 developing countries had already presented their initial national communication on implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the parties had reaffirmed their commitments to implementing the frameworks for capacity-building in developing countries. Despite the optimism shown at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, there was a very low level of consensus less than two weeks before the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties and the first meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol.

56. There was concern about the underlying message in the Secretary-General's report regarding the continuing challenges relating to resources, in the light of the current food situation in Africa, the challenge to meet the Millennium Development Goals, and the emphasis placed on agriculture and rural development at the 2005 World Summit. At a time when the United Nations was launching the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, there remained a huge gap between commitments made at the highest political level and action at the level of the Conference of the Parties and at the national level. The continued arrears in contributions was even more alarming and the Executive Secretary of the Convention should be authorized to enter into arrangements with any developing country party with unpaid contributions for two or more years which so wished, to unilaterally agree on a schedule of payments for such a party, to clear all outstanding unpaid contributions within six years, depending on the financial circumstances of that party, and to pay future contributions on time. It was vital to the development of several developing countries that the General Assembly act decisively on the issue.

57. **Mr. Thompson** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Turkey and Croatia; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, recalled that the 2005 World Summit Outcome had reaffirmed that comprehensive sustainable development was a key element of the overarching framework of United Nations activities. The European Union was strongly committed to working with international partners to ensure effective implementation of the corresponding commitments at all levels. While the General Assembly was not the only forum that needed to address those issues, it was a very important one that provided guidelines for all major stakeholders and could send a clear message regarding the intention to follow up on the decisions taken at the 2005 World Summit. The Second Committee could usefully build upon the Summit outcomes and the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the area of priority policies and actions concerning water, sanitation and human settlements.

58. The European Union welcomed the agreement at the 2005 World Summit to explore a more coherent institutional framework for environmental activities within the United Nations system, including a more integrated structure building on existing institutions, in the context of current efforts to strengthen the Organization. It also supported transforming the United Nations Environment Programme into a specialized

agency, based in Nairobi, with a strengthened mandate and stable, adequate financing.

59. The European Union's Water Initiative and Water Facility, launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, remained the framework for its efforts to promote more sustainable global use of available water resources. The focus was on reinforcing political commitment to action and promoting improved water governance and management. The European Union remained committed to assisting developing countries' efforts to prepare integrated water resources management plans as part of their national development strategies.

60. Small island developing States faced special environmental and developmental challenges and the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy provided a valuable blueprint for future international support for and collaboration with such States.

61. In the area of disaster reduction, the challenge was to transform Member States' commitments into action in developing countries where assistance was most needed. More needed to be done to reduce the burden of disasters on the poor and the most vulnerable; the focus must be on preventive rather than reactive measures, by taking into account the likely consequences of climate change. The establishment of a worldwide early warning system for all natural hazards was a step in that direction. The European Union had been discussing how to improve coordination of its own disaster reduction efforts, but it remained committed to contributing to an increased international effort.

62. The Kyoto Protocol would enter into force shortly; it was important that it was fully operationalized and that its targets were met as an essential first step towards addressing the challenge of climate change. The European Community and the member States of the European Union had put in place comprehensive measures to attain their Kyoto Protocol targets and were committed to exploring the development of a post-2012 arrangement.

63. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development, commitments had been made to diversify energy supply by developing alternative energy technologies and increasing the global share of renewable energy sources. It was particularly necessary to mainstream sustainable energy solutions within global energy policy. Further commitments had been made at the 2005 World Summit and the European Union looked forward to making tangible progress towards fulfilling those commitments, in particular through the energy focus of the current cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It remained committed to improving access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy services and was working in that direction.

64. The United Nations Convention to Combat Diversification was a key instrument for highlighting the linkages between poverty and land degradation. The latest Millennium Ecosystem Assessment highlighted the importance of biodiversity in supporting human well-being and the critical rate at which biodiversity was being lost. Urgent efforts were needed to ensure implementation of commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other international agreements. More needed to be done to mainstream biodiversity into sectoral policies and into poverty reduction strategies. Also, tangible progress was needed in negotiating an international regime on access and benefit-sharing. In addition, there must be urgent action against immediate threats to biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

65. Lastly, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) had an important role to play in assisting Member States to monitor and achieve Millennium Development Goal 11 on slum-dwellers and the targets on water and sanitation. With regard to environmentally sustainable human settlements, further improvements were needed in the areas of strategic planning, management and resource mobilization. The development of a medium-term strategic and institutional plan could build a more focused, effective organization and it was important to restore the centrality of the two global campaigns as the driving and organizing framework for all UN-Habitat activities.

66. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia) speaking on behalf of the member countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that sustainable development was embraced by governments, international and regional organizations and civil society. Nevertheless, poverty was a dominant concern of developing countries and sustained economic growth was the best tool to mobilize resources that could raise living standards, provide adequate health and education facilities, and promote environmental protection. While each country had the primary

responsibility for its own economic and social development, national policies and development strategies needed to be complemented by international and regional efforts. Developed countries should redouble their efforts to create an enabling international framework which recognized different stages of development and the lack of financial, institutional and technological capacity. Such a framework would maximize the positive effects of globalization for each country and ensure an equitable multilateral trading system which would stimulate development worldwide and benefit countries at all stages of development. Developed countries should also make specific efforts to reach the target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance.

67. The Asia-Pacific region contained two thirds of the world's poor; strong political will and bold decisive action were needed to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty. Regional and global partnerships and cooperation were crucial for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, regional cooperation needed to be linked with international cooperation to ensure programme synergy. To that end, ASEAN had initiated closer collaboration with the United Nations system and regional development agencies and was trying to catalyse intraregional initiatives for achieving the Goals through the development of an ASEAN Millennium Development Compact.

68. Developing countries could not attain sustainable development objectives unless natural disasters were addressed effectively. ASEAN had concluded an Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response in July 2005, to provide a legally binding regional framework for implementing disaster-reduction activities.

69. Sustainable development and poverty reduction were adversely affected by rising world oil prices. The ASEAN countries were now giving high priority to promoting energy efficiency, particularly in the transportation and industrial sectors, and to developing renewable energy sources, including by exploring different energy mixes. In view of the region's commitment to increase the share of renewable energy in power generation in the region to 10 per cent by 2010, ASEAN had agreed to promote public-private partnerships to encourage the development of alternative energy sources.

70. ASEAN welcomed the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and would participate actively in the first meeting of the parties to the Protocol in Montreal. Lastly, the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-Building should be implemented immediately through concrete actions with adequate and stable funding and South-South cooperation projects should be promoted in the context of the Plan.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.